



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Steve Branstetter or Steve.Branstetter@noaa.gov
(727) 570-5305, FAX (727) 570-5583
<http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov>

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SHRIMP FISHERY CLOSED IN FEDERAL WATERS OFF SOUTH CAROLINA AND GEORGIA

At the request of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council), NOAA Fisheries announces that, as of March 13, 2001, the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off South Carolina and Georgia is closed to the harvest of brown, pink, and white shrimp. This closure action is taken in accordance with the procedures and criteria specified in the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the South Atlantic Region, and its implementing regulations, and is intended to protect the spawning stock of white shrimp. Information provided by the states of South Carolina and Georgia indicates that there has been greater than an 80 percent mortality of overwintering white shrimp due to severe cold weather in the region. Based on this information, the Council requested that NOAA Fisheries' Assistant Administrator concurrently close the South Atlantic EEZ adjacent to the closed state waters.

During the closure no person may trawl for brown, pink or white shrimp in the closed area, and any vessel trawling in a part of a closed area that is within 25 nautical miles of the territorial sea must use trawl nets with a minimum mesh size of 4 inches or greater. Possession of brown, pink, or white shrimp is prohibited on board a vessel in the closed area unless the vessel is in transit through the area and all nets with a mesh size of less than 4 inches are stowed below deck.

The closure will be effective until the ending dates of the closures in the respective state's waters, but may be ended earlier based on a request by the states. In no case will the closure remain effective after June 15, 2001. NOAA Fisheries will provide notice to the public if the closure is terminated earlier than June 15, 2001.

This and other news releases are available on the Southeast Regional Office homepage at <http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov/>. NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Department of Commerce.